**Discussion Guide for Stakeholders**

**Don**

Thanks so much for joining us today. Our team is investigating how different users engage with the GI Bill Comparison Tool and are interested in hearing how you use the Comparison Tool in your work to support schools, employers, and their military-connected students.

**Warm-up Questions**

* [Name & Role]
* My name is Donald Noble I’m an ECSS. We go out to school and we go out and make sure that students are being treated properly. We make sure that they are getting fair tuition. That’s what we do. The reason I spoke out about the CT – it should be more of a transparency on it. It’s important that if they are reviewed and we find a discrepancy. Normally if a school gets a discrepancy, it’s common. I haven’t seen many people get hit on just one error that wasn’t repeated again. When a discrepancy is found, I think it would be helpful for students to see that this might be something they might encounter.
* Examples?
* One is getting their paperwork in on time. Normally a student has 30 days to get paperwork in or there’s a discrepancy which can affect a student’s money. If a school’s class doesn’t meet the VA standards and the school has to change the class, then it can affect the student because it might affect their BAH. I might not be able to get my BAH on time because this has happened at the school prior to.
* Where would it appear?
* I would put it where it would be near the complaints area – reason is because that’s the only area that has a blemish to the school. If you’re looking at concerns for a school, that’s where it appears.
* I can give you more examples. How many months he’ll be allowed. If he’s in debt. It can be a knee jerk reaction from all of that. If you do have that aggressive advertising for schools – that’s one of the discrepancy. If you tell students can get a job, does everyone get a job? Because that’s false advertising. I know the info you get comes from the WEAMS side – I think you can pull it from WEAMS. It would have to be updated from the ECSS side. Every school that we pay should have that. That should be universal across every school. There should be an audit or a compliance survey.
* ECSS – puts it into the WEAMS. When you go into a school’s particular file is the date of the survey, who did the survey, number of discrepancies, what discrepancies they had. All that is on the administrative side of it. How it would be done, I don’t know. But it can be done. It would let them know that the VA has recently been there and surveyed it. These would be things coming from the VA. I know we have caution flags. This would be something coming from us (the VA) and not data from others. The type of discrepancy determines where it goes. VA keeps a file of it. It’s more of a paper trail where we say we have to stop funding for this particular program, we have justification of why. So it becomes a repercussion. It would just bring some limelight into the things we do at ECSS.
* Where is info being displayed now?
* It is all internal information. The only thing that comes out is a narrative. You hold schools accountable for what we found. My big thing is a transparency. With caution flags, we have no dog in the fight. For this, we are holding them accountable for things that the VA is seeing about this school. So pretty much like a big brother overview – not saying we hold schools accountable to all surveys, but to the last one we did. When a Veteran goes on the CT, they can see things that the VA saw. They can say that this has been reported and is an issue. The school can’t say its not possible, because they have the same info we have.
* How often are schools surveyed?
* That’s higher than my level. I know as far as we are recommended per year is roughly 40 schools per person. They try and get every school. I know every ECSS tries to get 40 schools per year. We keep them all in rotation – if not this year, then next year. If they’re having issues, you see them more often or more frequently.
* How often per each school?
* You need to talk to my superiors. I just know what funnels down to us.
* If flagged, they are visited more often?
* Yes, most definitely. I used to do the CT and that was in 2016-2018. So when you’re dealing with the flags and trying to answer flags for other agencies. This is one thing we can say we have valid information. Now it’s going to be more open to the eyes to see. It’s more a pain in the eye until you correct it.
* It’s hard to explain others information. We can base it on information and it’s factual. It makes it very transparent. And it makes us more tedious because it puts a microscope on us, but it helps keep the schools in line.
* Other improvements?
* To me it looks great – it looks fabulous. It looks very put together. It looks so good for what it looks like compared to when I worked on it. Doing this would just be more transparent. We are affecting these schools of some sort
* It’s frequent to see at least one discrepancy – and when it’s over 4 it’s a big deal. We’ll start looking at things when it’s over 4. Some things are just common.
* Levels of discrepancies – yes, we do have them. I think I can pull all the discrepancies a school can have. So you can see all the different ones. Some are close in stature, but it’ll give you a more clear cut idea of how many they are. I’ll attach it to
* Other info other than discrepancies in the report? The biggest thing is the 85/15 with the overcrowding of Veterans. Everything else is already displayed on the CT. Anything else would be really getting into the weeds.
* OPTIONAL: Could you tell us a bit about how your work supports Veterans?
* How long have you been doing this work?

**Use of the Comparison Tool**

* How does the GI Bill Comparison Tool factor into your work?   
  + About how often do you use the Comparison Tool?
* What tasks do you use the Comparison Tool to accomplish?
  + What kind of information are you typically looking for?
  + What do you do with that information?
  + Are there other sites or tools you use to perform similar tasks?
  + Any other tasks? (repeat series, as needed)
* OPTIONAL: What are your thoughts on the accuracy of the information in the tool?
  + If you find information on schools that isn't accurate, what do you do?
  + How long does it take for information to be fixed?
* OPTIONAL: How do you find out about changes/updates to the Comparison Tool?
  + How effectively does that meet your needs?

**Making Improvements**

* If you could change the Comparison Tool to better meet your needs, what would you be able to do with it that you can’t now?  
  + How would that be beneficial to you?
* What else would you like it to do that it doesn’t already?
* Would you have any interest or need to update data in the Comparison Tool? If yes, what would you want to update?
* Is there anything within the Comparison Tool that you find incredibly useful as-is and think shouldn’t be changed?

**Thank-You and Closing**

Thank you! Those are all the questions we had for you today. Do you have any questions for me?

[ If time allows, ask for Qs from the team ]

We really appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts with us today. Your feedback will help us make ensure the Comparison Tool works well for those who rely on it.

Thank you so much and enjoy the rest of your day!